

**Vision 2020 Diversity Task Group  
Minutes of February 13, 2017 Meeting  
As amended on March 13, 2017**

Present: Sarita Duvadie, Alberto Guzman, Brooks Harrelson, Mary Harrison, David Landskov, Lynette Martyn, Ted Peluso, Louise Popkin, Mikel Satcher, Miriam Stein, and guests. Speaker: MA State Rep. Sean Garballey (D-Arlington, West Medford).

Minutes of the January 2017 meeting were approved.

**State Rep. Sean Garballey explained this proposed bill, The Safe Communities Act, co-sponsored by him, Rep. David Rogers and other lawmakers.**

The Safe Communities Act, *An Act to protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents* (SD1596/HD3052), would prohibit state collaboration with the federal government for the purpose of creating a Muslim Registry, and ensure that state resources are not used to enforce federal immigration law. This bill is an extension of the Trust Act which was filed in previous legislative sessions.

Gov. Baker. He has not taken a position on the bill. Senate President Rosenberg supports it. Speaker of the House of Representatives DeLeo is cautious and conservative. The plan is to try to bring up the bill sooner rather than later.

Immigrant attorneys disagree among themselves on the extent of federal powers over states with regard to withholding of federal funding over Sanctuary City declarations. It's a complex and nuanced issue.

This bill will not be passed in the State House before Arlington considers a similar proposal during this spring's Town Meeting. Some Arlingtonians oppose the bill because they think [incorrectly] that it might protect illegal immigrants from being apprehended if they commit a crime. Not so.

Bottom line is that the Police Department should not use state or federal funds to stop and check people's identity and immigration status, exclusively because of the color of their skin, e.g. as in a "raid" or when stopping a motor vehicle if occupants look Hispanic or have dark skin. If passed, the MA Bill will put more pressure on Congress in Washington to debate comprehensive immigration reform, rather than have 50 states come up with 50 policies.

Q: So what can people in Arlington do?

Call friends who live in other parts of the state and ask them to call their State Rep. and Senator to support the Safe Communities Act (SD1596/HD3052). Testimony can be given at future hearings, either verbally in person, or in writing. Write Letters to the Editor of as many publications as possible, and then use the same text to send in as

written testimony to the appropriate committee, once assigned. He expects the bill to be assigned to the Joint Committee on the Judiciary but that's not guaranteed. The Judiciary Committee is currently working on criminal justice reform, which is keeping them busy. The ACLU and Amnesty International support the bill. U. Mass. Amherst is debating the issue of becoming a "Sanctuary University".

Q: What are other state legislatures doing?

Sean will try to get that information out to the email list of people who attended this meeting.

Most Police Chiefs and Sheriffs oppose this bill, not wanting to risk federal resources for their budgets.

Sean will also send some "talking points", fact sheets, etc. in support of the bill.

### **Other Topics Discussed**

The January Upstander Workshop by True Story Theatre was well attended. The upcoming February workshop has over 60 registrants.

Another group that has been running Upstander Workshops for a decade is Quabbin Mediation (<https://quabbinmediation.org>). They also "train the trainer." More information about this group will be on the March agenda.

Bridging Two Communities. The first meeting of parents of students in the METCO program and Arlington parents, educators and students was held on Jan. 18 in Roxbury. More than 80 people attended. A planning group was formed that will plan future get-togethers. An article about the evening appeared in the Arlington Advocate.

The Arlington Welcome Center (in Arlington Center) is working on multi-cultural displays/foods for warmer weather with the theme of celebrating Arlington's diversity. Right on the bike path, the Center gets lots of traffic.

Submitted by Chris Huvos and Miriam Stein